

TRANSPORTATION



Community Reinvestment Strategy • Cluster 1

Transportation

Regional Context

Southeast Michigan is well served by one of the most comprehensive highway systems in the U.S. However, the condition of these roadways as well as many local roads has deteriorated in recent years. The State legislature recently approved a gas tax increase of four cents per gallon to raise funds to repair roads and bridges throughout Michigan. The tax increase will generate approximately \$200 million in additional funds for road improvements.

The City's and the region's mass transportation needs are served by the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Southeastern Michigan Area Regional Transportation (SMART). DDOT's fleet consists of 563 full-size buses, 23 shuttle size buses for routes with lower than average passenger traffic and 35 paratransit vehicles operated under the Detroit MetroLift program. DDOT serves the City of Detroit and 41 suburban communities along 60 bus lines and carries about 150,000 passengers per day (approximately 82% of the region's bus passengers). DDOT's 1996 Transit Survey found that 52% of their passengers are transit-dependent persons with no vehicles in the household.¹

In 1996, DDOT implemented a Labor Mobility Project, "Translink". The program is designed to provide fast and direct access for City of Detroit residents to job opportunities in outlying areas of the City as well as suburban job locations. Although the "Translink" project began in late 1996, most of the routes have only been operating since February 1997. Recent data show the "Translink" service provides over 7,784 trips per month to employment centers primarily outside of Detroit.²

Cluster 1 Transportation Profile

Cluster 1 has excellent access to east-west (I-94) and north-south (I-75) highways as well as a number of major arterial roadways, such as Van Dyke, McNichols, Seven Mile and Eight Mile. A number of cross-town and 24-hour DDOT and SMART bus routes run through the Cluster (Map 19). DDOT and SMART offer a convenient means of transportation for residents commuting to work as well as for students who ride the bus to school. A CRS survey completed by a very small (11) sample of Cluster residents found that almost half of the respondents used the bus system "often" as a means of transportation to work. This is not surprising since over one-third of Cluster residents do not have access to a vehicle. Map 9 shows the percentage of occupied housing units without automobile access.

Recent and Planned Transportation Improvements

The draft FY 1998 - FY 2000 Transportation Improvement Program for Southeast Michigan³ includes the following planned major transportation improvement for Cluster 1:

- ❖ McNichols Road - Reconstruct/reopen from Van Dyke to Conner with a four lane tunnel; no new capacity
- ❖ Seven Mile Road at the Grand Trunk Western (GTW) railroad crossing - Regrade crossing and improve protection

No other improvements have been specifically identified for Cluster 1 roadways, although the following improvements are planned City-wide:

- ❖ Resurface roadways - Resurface as required
- ❖ Improvements at high accident areas - Geometric changes and signal revisions
- ❖ Intersection improvements - Intersection channelization
- ❖ Signal modernization - Revise and connect new signals; 25 locations City-wide
- ❖ Lane marking - Long life polyester paint; 2,500,000 linear feet

The AAA Michigan Road Improvement Pilot Project targeted five high-crash locations in Detroit for road improvements. Two of the five high crash locations targeted for improvements are in Cluster 1; the intersection of Seven Mile and Ryan and the intersection of Seven Mile and John R. Improvements to the Seven Mile/Ryan intersection were completed in May 1997 at a cost of \$36,100. The improvements to the other four sites will be completed within two years.⁴

Transportation Assets & Opportunities

Roadways

The Cluster has excellent access to east-west (I-94) and north-south (I-75) highways as well as a number of major arterial roadways, such as Van Dyke, McNichols, Seven Mile and Eight Mile. However, many Cluster roads are in need of repaving, particularly those that have significant truck traffic as well as a number of low volume neighborhood streets.

Mass Transportation

A number of cross-town and 24-hour DDOT and SMART bus routes run through the Cluster (Map 19).

Railways

A number of railways provide access to industrial areas in the Cluster, including the Grand Trunk Western (GTW) and the Detroit Terminal Rail Road. A Conrail line also runs through the Cluster (Map 19).

Transportation Issues

Generally the existing roadways are sufficient to meet the transportation needs of residents in the Cluster, although many residents have concerns about truck traffic on some roads. Residents are also concerned about the delivery and safety of mass transportation services and the condition of Cluster roads. Residents identified truck traffic in and near residential areas and the closing of McNichols between French and Conner as issues that need to be considered. In the long-term (20 to 25 years), residents would like to have a wider variety of mass transit choices, including a light rail or street car system.

Public Transportation Services

Over one-third of all Cluster residents do not have access to a private vehicle and a CRS transportation survey found that half of the respondents rely on mass transportation as their primary means of getting to work. This highlights the importance of a reliable, accessible mass transportation system in the Cluster. While the DDOT and SMART systems are well established and have the infrastructure available to meet the needs of the community, a number of physical and service improvements could be made to enhance the system. Cluster residents expressed concern about their safety while waiting at bus stops and would like cleaner and better lighted bus shelters, as well as bus schedules posted at each shelter. Residents would also like bus drivers to provide more professional and courteous service, on-time service, and accurate schedule and route information.

Condition of Cluster Roads

As in many areas throughout the City, a number of arterial, local and neighborhood streets are in poor condition and need to be repaved or resurfaced. (A list of roadways that residents have identified as being the highest priority for repavement, is shown in the Transportation Reinvestment Recommendations section.)

Summary of Transportation Assets, Opportunities and Issues

Assets	Opportunities and Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Extensive network of DDOT and SMART routes throughout the Cluster ❖ Easy access to major highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve DDOT services and on-time record ❖ Increase the number of bus routes to suburban job centers ❖ Designate specific buses for school-age children and offer discounted student fares ❖ Improve safety around bus stops by providing well-lighted bus shelters ❖ Reopen McNichols between French and Conner ❖ Prohibit and/or impose time use restrictions on truck routes near residential areas ❖ Aggressively enforce speed limits particularly on residential streets and commercial roads

- 1 "Translink" Program: Connecting the Regional Economy: Reverse Commute from the Inner City to Suburban Employers, Detroit Department of Transportation.
- 2 Detroit Department of Transportation "Translink" Program.
- 3 FY 1998.- 2000 Transportation Improvement Programs for Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG, 1997.
- 4 Michigan Living July 1997.